

1. QUESTION: Can the project area and budget be revised from what was presented in the pre-proposal?

ANSWER: YES. Full proposals will be evaluated anew against the published goals and objectives of 3DEP and the specific criteria specified in Paragraph VIa. of the BAA.

2. QUESTION: We had a planning meeting today with the counties and tribes on the development of a full proposal. If our full proposal submission reduces the area that was proposed in the pre-proposal by about a third to 3,200 square miles, would such a proposal warrant submission as a full proposal?

ANSWER: YES. Full proposals will be evaluated anew against the published goals and objectives of 3DEP and the specific criteria specified in Paragraph VIa. of the BAA. "Areas with large areal extent (over 1500 square miles)" is a criteria against which proposals will be evaluated.

3. QUESTION: We did not submit a Pre-proposal. Will this limit our chances of getting the grant?

ANSWER: The BAA states: "Prospective offerors are highly encouraged to submit pre-proposals, though not required. The purpose of requesting pre-proposals is to minimize the labor and cost associated with the production of detailed proposals that have very little chance of being selected for funding". The pre-proposal stage was for the benefit of the Offeror. Full proposals will be evaluated anew against the published goals and objectives of 3DEP and the specific criteria specified in Paragraph VIa. of the BAA.

4. QUESTION: How do we supply a cost estimate if we are requesting that the USGS acquire the data for us? Can USGS provide us the total cost based on our pre-proposal or should we acquire an estimated cost assumption from local vendors?

ANSWER: Estimates can be reported using a per square mile rate as published in the National Enhanced Elevation Assessment (\$335 per square mile for QL2, \$547 per square mile for QL1, and \$90 for Alaska QL5). While these prices are on the high side (as prices have declined since the NEEA Assessment), just note that you are making your estimate based on these rates.

5. QUESTION: If USGS acquires the data for our community, does USGS cover the entire cost or only 50%?

ANSWER: The implementation model for 3DEP is based on multi-agency partnership funding for acquisition. Paragraph IV4 of the BAA states that "appropriations law requires that the USGS may not pay more than one-half the cost of topographic mapping carried on in cooperation with States and municipalities". While the law will allow USGS to fund up to 50% of a project, due to average annual USGS funding levels, the average cost share provided by the USGS in the past year was in the range of 15-27%. Offerors should note that per Paragraph VIa.2.- "Cost sharing contribution proposed by Offeror" is a criteria against which proposals will be evaluated. Offerors are highly encouraged to maximize the cost-share percentage of their offer.

6. QUESTION: Cost Sharing or Matching.....law requires that USGS may not pay more than one-half the cost of topographic mapping carried on in cooperation with State and municipalities. Could you explain

this in greater detail? Does the "topographic mapping" include the total cost of acquisition of LiDAR and the processing? Does the match have to 50%?

ANSWER: All components of the 3D Elevation Program are considered topographic mapping, that would include both the acquisition and the processing. Paragraph IV4 of the BAA states that "appropriations law requires that the USGS may not pay more than one-half the cost of topographic mapping carried on in cooperation with States and municipalities". While the law will allow USGS to fund up to 50% of a project, due to average annual USGS funding levels, the average cost share provided by the USGS in the past year was in the range of 15-27%. Offerors should note that per Paragraph VIa.2.- "Cost sharing contribution proposed by Offeror" is a criteria against which proposals will be evaluated. Offerors are highly encouraged to maximize the cost-share percentage of their offer.

7. QUESTION: If we are requesting that the USGS acquire the data, do we need to provide past performance information for relevant and current references?

*ANSWER: Offerors responding to the USGS BAA Broad Agency Announcement for 3D Elevation Program G14PS00574 who propose to utilize the USGS GPSC contract as the means to acquire data **DO NOT** need to submit past performance information.*

8. QUESTION: If USGS provides us the data under LiDAR specification version 1.1, may we request additional manipulation to ensure a more robust data capability?

ANSWER: As stated in the BAA - "The USGS anticipates awarding lidar projects for QL2 data. However, this does not preclude Offerors from proposing projects for the acquisition of higher quality data. The USGS will only contribute funds for the cost of QL2 data and any costs associated with the upgrade to higher quality data will be borne solely by the Offeror. These upgrade costs should be specifically delineated in the proposal".

9. QUESTION: We expect to make an argument for full USGS funding of QL1 data collection. If we are not persuasive, will there be an opportunity to negotiate an adjusted project area with QL2 funding?

ANSWER: As stated in the BAA - "The USGS anticipates awarding lidar projects for QL2 data. However, this does not preclude offerors from proposing projects for the acquisition of higher quality data. The USGS will only contribute funds for the cost of QL2 data and any costs associated with the upgrade to higher quality data will be borne solely by the offeror. These upgrade costs should be specifically delineated in the proposal".

10. QUESTION: How definite must the sources of match be in order for the proposal to be eligible for funding? Capital Budget funds would not be available until July 1, 2015 if appropriated.

ANSWER: The Offeror must state the estimated total cost of the project and the % of funds that they are requesting from the USGS. If the specific sources of funding cannot be identified by the 12/12/14 deadline, the proposal must state the potential sources and the level of confidence in the sources. This information will be taken into consideration in the evaluation of the proposal.

Paragraph IV4 of the BAA states that “appropriations law requires that the USGS may not pay more than one-half the cost of topographic mapping carried on in cooperation with States and municipalities”. While the law will allow USGS to fund up to 50% of a project, due to average annual USGS funding levels, the average cost share provided by the USGS in the past year was in the range of 15-27%. Offerors should note that per Paragraph VIa.2.- “Cost sharing contribution proposed by Offeror” is a criteria against which proposals will be evaluated. Offerors are highly encouraged to maximize the cost-share percentage of their offer.

11. QUESTION: If no firm match commitment(s) can be documented prior to 12/12, should the “Offeror” refrain from submitting a final proposal at this time?

ANSWER: Proposals will be accepted for work to commence in the Spring or Fall/Winter 2015 acquisition cycles. If a firm commitment of funds cannot be established by the 12/12/14 due date of the current BAA, the proposal must state a date by which a commitment of funds could be established. This information will be taken into consideration in the evaluation of the proposal.

As stated in the BAA, “the BAA will remain open and proposals received after the 12/12/2014 due date will be considered for review until September 30, 2015” or until such time as the BAA is cancelled through an amendment or another BAA is issued; additional selections will be made depending on availability of funding and evaluation of proposals consistent with the evaluation criteria provided”.

The 3D Elevation Program Initiative – A Call for Action (<http://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/1399/>) provides multiple references to 3DEP as a multi-year program. As the 3DEP goal is national coverage, Offerors who are not in a position to submit a proposal this year will have additional opportunities to submit a proposal for funds as the program progresses.

12. QUESTION: What level of commitment is required as proof of funding when we submit the final proposal? Will we need signed letters of commitment from all funding partners or will verbal commitments of funding support be adequate until the formal acquisition agreement is established between the offeror and USGS?

ANSWER: Verbal commitments of funding will be adequate for the 12/12/14 deadline. However the proposal must state these potential sources of funding and the level of confidence in the sources. This information will be taken into consideration in the evaluation of the proposal.

13. QUESTION: We plan on pursuing funding partners after the final proposal has been submitted. Will USGS be willing to negotiate a modification of the proposed acquisition area from that which is proposed if the additional funds have been found?

ANSWER: The Offeror must state the estimated total cost of the project and the % of funds that they are requesting from the USGS. If the specific sources of funding cannot be identified by the 12/12/14 deadline, the proposal must state the potential sources and the level of confidence in the sources. This information will be taken into consideration in the evaluation of the proposal. While the Offeror reserves the right to request modifications to an award that will increase the size of the project area, the USGS is

under no obligation to provide additional funds. The cost of the additional area would be the sole responsibility of the Offeror.

14. QUESTION: Will we be required to have any partner funding obligated at the time we propose?

ANSWER: The USGS anticipates that the requests for funding will far exceed the extent of the FY15 funds that are available to issue awards through the BAA partnership opportunity. While there is no requirement that the funds be physically obligated at the time the proposals are submitted, offerors should indicate the reliability of any partnership funds offered as matching funds within the BAA proposal. "Cost Sharing Contribution Proposed by Offeror" is a criteria by which proposals will be scored. The USGS will be looking for offers with reliable cost contributions. Financial obligations between the USGS and an Offeror will be secured at the time of award.

15. QUESTION: Will USGS try to broker collaborative projects between states? Will USGS be looking for opportunities to combine funded projects?

ANSWER: For Offerors who propose to utilize the GPSC contract, the USGS reserves the right (post award) to combine projects to achieve greater cost efficiency. Achieving greater cost efficiency is in the best interest of both the USGS and the Offerors. Due to procurement restrictions the USGS will not be looking for opportunities to combine projects from Offerors proposing to be the acquiring authority. Future plans of the 3DEP program include the implementation of multiple processes that will provide potential Offerors the opportunity to interact with other interested parties within or near an Offerors area of interest.

16. QUESTION: The area that we are interested in acquiring LiDAR is not included on the Priority Map. Does this limit our chances?

ANSWER: Areas identified by Federal Agencies as priority needs (see attachment a, section 10 of the BAA) is just one of the criteria against which proposals will be evaluated. All proposals will receive a collective score based on the evaluation of the proposal against the published goals and objectives of 3DEP and each of the specific criteria listed in paragraph VIa. of the BAA.

17. QUESTION: Since we will be proposing USGS acquisition and a joint funding arrangement, is it correct is that we do NOT need to apply through Grants.gov but simply send the proposal to you by email?

ANSWER: That is correct. Acquisition proposals, for projects to be contracted either through the USGS GPSC or through the offeror's contracting mechanisms are to be submitted electronically to the Contracting Officer at vfloyd@usgs.gov.

18. QUESTION: In the BAA, Paragraph V the proposal content lists ""List of required dataset deliverables and minimum acceptance criteria" twice, once after the Technical Proposal and again after the Diagram (map). Are these the same content?

ANSWER: Yes, this content was inadvertently listed twice. These are not two separate requirements.

19. QUESTION: Is the value of the award that this statement refers to the award for each proposed project, or the entire 3-year request? Many of our past projects have been quite large, but have been funded by multiple partners, so any single agency I ask to fill out the questionnaire may have contributed less than the 25% threshold required, even if the aggregate project value was much larger than 25%. How should I handle this? Would those agencies questionnaires be valid?

ANSWER: Yes, these agencies questionnaires would be valid.

20. QUESTION: On page 8 of the BAA it talks about what the proposals need to contain. My question is in the technical proposal description it mentions "discussion of data acquisition requirements", is this supposed to be a description of how the data will be used? If not, can you clarify or give an example.

ANSWER: "Data Acquisition Requirements" is an overarching statement under which you describe exactly what it is you want to acquire, under what circumstances you hope to acquire it and the method you propose to use for the acquisition and processing of the data. You could/would also include some statements that reference the specific need for or value of the data over that geographic extent. While the following is an OVER SIMPLIFIED statement, it is enough to demonstrate the intent of the section: We propose to collect QL2 data over the counties of X, Y, Z and D. The data is to be collected during the leaf-off Fall 2015/ Spring 2016 acquisition cycle. We propose to utilize the services of the USGS GPSC to manage the acquisition of the data. The updated elevation data would allow planning and preparation for emergency response, transportation planning ... It is the part of your proposal that if extracted from the whole would still allow someone to understand what you want to do and why.

21. QUESTION: In our region the National Resource Conservation Service has occasionally provided a share of funding for LiDAR collection in partnership with USGS. But in my experience, this agreement has always been worked out between USGS and NRCS internally. Will USGS and NRCS continue to consider funding partnerships? Will they be inter-agency agreements or will we have to get proof of commitment from NRCS for our projects on our own?

ANSWER: If an Offeror's proposal includes a commitment of funds from the NRCS, the proposal should include the amount of the commitment and the NRCS POC who verbally committed the funds. In addition, the NRCS will review project proposals that fall within NRCS high priority areas and may offer funds in support of or to expand an Offerors proposed project area. If the project is utilizing the GPSC services, the USGS will be responsible for completing the inter-agency agreement between the USGS and the NRCS. If the Offeror is proposing to be the acquiring authority, the Offeror may (situation dependent) be responsible for the agreement that passes the funds between the NRCS and the Offeror. These project specific details would be worked out post award.

22. QUESTION: Will USGS be willing to consider a proposal for a multi-year acquisition schedule?

ANSWER: While a proposal may include an Offeror's intent to acquire data over multiple years, the USGS will only award funds for FY15 acquisition (for work scheduled to commence in the Spring or Fall/Winter 2015 acquisition cycles). The Offeror would need to reapply each year to be considered for additional funding.

23. QUESTION: We are required to charge indirect costs to any grants or cooperative funds we receive (we have a negotiated rate with DOI). Can we request that in addition to the \$335/mi2 rate for QL2 data or does it have to be included in the rate?

ANSWER: All proposed costs need to be included in an Offeror's proposal. The evaluation of the proposal will include an assessment of the overall value to the government.

24. QUESTION: A question regarding the Grant Instructions for the 3DEP Grant: Past Performance (page 8 of BAA dated October 24, 2014)

The (omitted) does not have relevant past performance, although we do not intend to do the LiDAR acquisition. We will be going out for RFP soon; however, we are unsure how to deal with this bullet item. Should we submit a letter stating we have no relevant past performance? Or is this item not necessary for us to address since we will not be the entity acquiring the LiDAR? If we need to submit a letter, could you confirm that the letter needs to be emailed/faxed to you by December 2nd?

ANSWER: The BAA States that "Offerors who have no record of past performance must submit a signed and dated statement to that effect. If an Offeror submits a certification statement and the Government has no information available regarding the Offeror's past performance, that Offeror will receive a neutral rating (i.e. the Offeror is evaluated neither favorably nor unfavorably) for past performance. USGS has extended the deadline for the past performance information until 12/09/14.

In cases where an Offeror has not yet selected a contractor, the past performance is assessed against the Offeror themselves. The USGS would be interested in the Offeror's ability to fund, manage and assure the delivery of a quality product for the scope of project in the Offeror's proposal.

25. QUESTION: A question regarding the Grant Instructions for the 3DEP Grant: Budget (Grant application Section 18 in the SF-424)

We estimate \$X from local funding, and we are requesting \$Y as our grant request (does this local funding go in "b. Applicant" or "d. Local"?). Which line item should \$Y grant request be placed? "a. Federal" or "f. Program Income"?

ANSWER: The local funding should go in b. Applicant. The \$Y should be placed on line a. Federal.

26. QUESTION: "Section V. c. Application and Submission Information, Format and Content of Proposals (Stage 2)" on page 8 of the BAA requires a shapefile of the proposed project area. However, the proposal format states that additional files will not be accepted (bottom of page 7).

ANSWER: The "Additional attached files will not be accepted" statement should have been amended to include the submission of a "shapefile". Offerors must submit a GIS-readable polygon file of their proposed project area. While other gis files may have been used to create the project diagram for the proposal, USGS will only use the polygon boundary of the project area. GIS-readable files should include all necessary files and projection definition information required to use the data in ESRI ArcGIS software. Acceptable file formats are: ESRI Shapefile or ESRI File Geodatabase version 10.0 or higher. The GIS-

readable file may be zipped to aid in submission of the files via email. USGS will contact Offerors for replacement files if the files are missing information or are unreadable by USGS's configuration of ESRI ArcGIS v10.0.

IF an offeror is unable to submit the shapefile through the grants.gov website, the Offeror should submit the file directly to vfloyd@usgs.gov. Please select a name for your file that will make it easy to match the shapefile to the proposal. Offerors should include the name of their file within the text of their proposal.

27. QUESTION: If the offeror has no record of relevant past performance we are required to submit a signed and dated statement to that effect. Is that signed statement considered part of the 10 page allowable page count? Should it be included with the proposal or as an attachment?

ANSWER: The signed and dated statement is not a part of so not subject to the 10 page limit. The statement needs to be provided in advance to vfloyd@usgs.gov or alternately the form can be e-mailed or faxed to Victoria Floyd per the contact information provided in the BAA.

28. QUESTION: I do have one question – if you are working with a County, in terms of the statement below, would the county submit through grants.gov or directly to the USGS Office of Acquisition and Grants in an email to you? Wouldn't our arrangement be an interagency agreement?

"Proposals for acquisition projects in which the financial agreement between the USGS and the Offeror is to be in the form of a contract (such as joint funding agreements, interagency agreements, collaborative agreements) must be submitted electronically to the Contracting Officer at vfloyd@usgs.gov in the following format"

ANSWER: Request for Cooperative Agreements or Grants need to be submitted through grants.gov; proposals for contracts should be submitted directly to the Contracting Officer at vfloyd@usgs.gov. Based on your reference to "Interagency Agreement", you would submit your proposal directly to Ms. Floyd. While the "Interagency Agreement" you reference is used by the USGS to transfer funds between federal agencies, the concept of joint funding is similar and is obtained through the "contracts" process. Completion of the appropriate agreement documentation is part of the awards process. Acquisition Specialist will be available to provide assistance to offerors receiving awards.

29. QUESTION: In the following examples, who needs to submit Past Performance Questionnaire?

- a. Offeror is County X, if award is granted to County X they will make use of USGS GPSC contract to acquire data

*ANSWER: Offerors responding to the USGS BAA Broad Agency Announcement for 3D Elevation Program G14PS00574 who propose to utilize the USGS GPSC contract as the means to acquire data **DO NOT** need to submit past performance information.*

- b. Offeror is County X, if award is granted to County X they will make use of Contractor Z to acquire data

ANSWER: The past performance will be assessed against County X in their ability to fund, manage and assure the delivery of a quality product for the scope of project in the Offeror's proposal. The evaluation of the Contractor Z would be included in the technical evaluation.

- c. Offeror is County X, if award is granted to County X they will issue a request for proposals to select a contractor to acquire the data, contractor not yet known.

ANSWER: In cases where an Offeror has not yet selected a contractor, the past performance is assessed against the Offeror themselves. The USGS would be interested in the Offeror's ability to fund, manage and assure the delivery of a quality product for the scope of project in the Offeror's proposal.

- d. Offeror is Consortium of Counties representing counties A,B,C,D. If award is granted to Consortium, they will allocate funds to individual counties A,B,C,D each of whom will select a contractor to acquire data. Contractors not yet known.

ANSWER: Past performance will be assessed against the Offeror (Consortium of Counties). The Consortium of Counties will be the signator on the award documents and the party who is ultimately responsible for the quality and delivery of the final products. The USGS would need to assess the ability of the Offeror to manage such as project.